



Transportation Advisory Committee.

Date: January 10, 2024.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: John Alessi (DPCD), John Aslanian, Beth Benedikt, Bill Copithorne (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Kenny Fennell, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Ofer Mazor, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Petru Sofio and Joe Solomon.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

B. Approval of December 13, 2023 Meeting Notes.

Minutes for the Meeting of December 13, 2023, were approved.

C. Correspondence Sent/Received from December 9, 2023 to January 5, 2024. No correspondence was sent/received during this time interval.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

There were no public comments.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

A. Update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (John Alessi, DPCD).

Stratton Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project: This is a project to add and upgrade sidewalks and crosswalks along Hemlock St and Dickson Ave to Stratton Elementary School. The right-of-way process is underway. The Warrant Article will be before Town Meeting this spring for approval.

Bike Lane Design Guide: The guide is being finalized and will be completed by the end of February.

B. Update from the Department of Public Works (Bill Copithorne, DPW).

River Street: Select Board approved the School Zone Memo. The speed-feedback sign was installed in December, funded by an award from MassDOT. Traffic data will be collected from the digital sign and shared with MassDOT. Final static signs and pavement markings will be done in the future.

Warren St: Signage for bump outs installed; no reported problems from snow-plow trucks after the last snow storm. Scott Smith requested that center bollards be returned after snow storms when possible to facilitate safe pedestrian crossing. Bill Copithorne responded that he will inform the DPW Highway Division to place the bollards.

Pavement conditions survey: RFP is being prepared. Data to-be collected are for roadways only (does not include sidewalks) and will be used by DPW for pavement rehabilitation planning.

C. There was no update from the Police Department.

4. Park Ave Corridor.

A. Update: Park Ave / Wollaston Ave / Paul Revere Rd.

Two pedestrians were struck by drivers at the Wollaston Ave and Park Ave intersection in the past two months. In response to the APD Chief request, DPW installed new pedestrian-crossing signs. An advance warning sign in the uphill direction was not installed, as it was not clear where to place it.

The Town has been considering safety improvements, which have been delayed for various reasons including future MWRA construction along Park Ave from Route 2 to Wollaston Ave, which will require disruptive physical excavation. DPW has developed sketches of geometry changes to the intersection to reduce

pedestrian crossing distances with curb bump outs. Notably, the existing sidewalk on Wollaston Ave lacks ramps and requires accessibility improvements.

Jeff Maxtutis remarked that this is a complex intersection for drivers and pedestrians, and the DPW concepts were a good start. Northbound/downhill is used as two lanes during rush hour. Without room, vehicles will queue in the left-turn lane and traffic will back up to Paul Revere Rd. Left-turning traffic onto Paul Revere Rd is high volume. Consider a raised crossing across Paul Revere Rd as there is cross traffic on Paul Revere Rd, and consider a pedestrian refuge across the wide expanse of Park Ave at Wollaston Ave.

Beth Benedikt commented that northbound drivers on Park Ave heading towards Mass Ave see one lane change to two lanes, and drivers are not clear on what to do. Laura Swan added that the diagonal parking is unusual for the Town.

Petru Sofio asked if there was a Complete Streets design for this corridor? Bill Copithorne and John Alessi responded that many different concept designs are being considered.

Shoji Takahashi asked if there was crash reconstruction information, which could inform what safety measures might be needed. Bill Copithorne responded that no conclusions have been made available. Len Diggins added that TAC needs to know what happened and not assume what the problem might have been. He urged for short-term measures such as flex posts to test quickly what might work to improve the safety of the intersection.

B. Discussion: Park Ave / Oakland Ave Crosswalk.

Jeff Maxtutis summarized the Working Group's observations including resident feedback and design sketch by Petru Sofio. The Working Group has a number of improvements under consideration:

Immediate term: add an in-street yield to pedestrian bollard sign; add retroreflective crosswalk sign on the back of existing crosswalk signs to improve awareness; and trim tree branches that obstruct driver view.

Short term: install flex post curb extensions and assess their efficacy. Check speed limits for Park Ave, and ensure proper placement of speed limit signs.

Long term: install sidewalks on Oakland Ave to connect the intersection, and consider curb extensions if flex-post trial is successful. Install speed feedback radar sign.

Scott Smith said that short-term work should be done by the spring (including Wollaston Ave). Consider long-term curb extensions and RRFB. In the present configuration, an RRFB will be placed far from the roadway, which would limit its utility.

Shoji Takahashi asked whether a center pedestrian island would be useful in this location. Laura Swan noted that Scott Smith had suggested at the last meeting a widening of the center line. Bill Copithorne said that for high-volume roadways, DPW has switched to 6"-wide spacing instead of 4"-wide spacing of double-yellow center line. Jeff Maxtutis responded that a center pedestrian island will be considered; it will require a minimum 4' wide center.

Beth Benedikt asked about a raised pedestrian crossing in this location. Jeff Maxtutis responded that the high volume and high-speed of this location is not well suited for a raised crosswalk design.

Jeff Maxtutis asked if TAC should vote for the immediate items tonight. Scott Smith said that no regulations are being changed, so there is nothing for the Select Board to vote. Len Diggins agreed, but added that the Select Board should be kept informed. Jim Stubbe urged that TAC should adhere to its processes. Laura Swan countered that a vote tonight will permit discussions with the Town Manager sooner.

John Alessi said that there will be a discussion on near-term improvements at the Select Board meeting of January 22. TAC did not vote on the immediate-term improvements and will discuss it further at the next meeting.

5. Discussion: Mass Ave / Appleton St Preliminary Design

John Alessi summarized that the conceptual design was presented on November 23, 2023, and feedback was received. The feedback was integrated into the plan, and a preliminary design has been released including response comments from Stantec. These have been posted on the Town website.

Scott Smith commented that bicycle speeds of 10 – 15 mph is for flat grounds. The downhill section by Dunkin Donuts should be planned for 15 mph. John Alessi will convey the comment, and he noted that Stantec is also examining how the project can be implemented with the existing grading changes along the corridor.

John Aslanian said that he appreciates the straighter bike lane by the Appleton intersection island. Petru Sofio urged that bicycles be provided a leading interval in advance of motor vehicles through the intersection due to potential conflicts with turning movements. He said that MassDOT uses a loop-hole in design guides by adding a circular plaque for bike phase leading interval.

6. Discussion: Medford St Bike Lane Design.

John Alessi summarized that Medford St bike lanes connect the Chestnut St Safety Project and the Mystic River Path Project. Pavement markings will be

installed in the spring at the same time as Warren St. The plans have been posted to the Town website and is funded by the Town.

Petru Sofio appreciated the parking-protected bike lanes. He suggested the following: (1) adding a buffer between moving traffic and parking; (2) adding traffic cones at beginning of the bike lanes to prevent automobiles from entering or blocking the bike lane; (3) apply green paint to mark separated bike lanes; (4) instead of "End Bike Lane" sign, use "Bikes May Use Full Lane" or "Bike Merging" sign; and (5) install No Parking signs by the bike lane.

John Alessi said that applying green paint to bike lanes doubles the cost of the project. The Town is seeking ways to reduce the cost of projects and developing priority areas for green paint. Petru Sofio suggested that white-paint bike symbols or elephant-feet pavement markings can be substituted.

Scott Smith directed attention to the parking-protected bike lane between Warren St and Lewis Ave. He suggested traditional bike lane placement as southbound motor-vehicle traffic on Medford St making a left turn on to Lewis Ave may have difficulty navigating oncoming traffic and bike lane traffic. John Aslanian agree with the point.

Jeff Maxtutis asked if storm grates along the proposed bike lane are bicycle friendly. Bill Copithorne said that the storm grates should be fine, but DPW will check.

Laura Swan asked if the Town considered flex posts in areas where drivers might need to-be guided. John Alessi responded that they have not considered the use of bollards for this project. The Town will need to develop ideas and priorities on how to use bollards.

7. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.